

The SERVICE Act will create real and lasting accountability at the VA; expand access to and improve the quality of a health care system specifically designed for veterans; modernize the disability claims appeals process; improve the transition from military service to civilian life through better jobs, education, training, and housing resources; reduce veteran homelessness; and ensure the VA has the facilities it needs to properly serve veterans.

Summary of Key Provisions

Title I – Accountability

- Expands protections for whistleblowers by creating an independent VA Office of Accountability and Whistleblower Protections.
- Holds VA regional offices accountable when failing to meet goals concerning timeliness and accuracy of veterans' claims adjudication.
- Allows for the expedited removal and suspension without pay of VA employees based on misconduct that threatens the health and safety of veterans, while maintaining Constitutional due process.
- Allows the VA to recoup bonuses and/or relocation expenses in cases of fraud, waste, or malfeasance.

Title II - Health Care

- Improves communication between VA and private health care providers, and streamlines the ability of the VA to contract with community providers.
- Makes permanent the VA's childcare program for beneficiaries using the Veterans Health Administration (VHA).
- Provides coverage for disabled veterans for in vitro fertilization (IVF) treatments.
- Expands the VA caregiver's program to disabled service members who served on active duty prior to September 11, 2001.
- Expands coverage for emergency and urgent care.
- Improves the VA's recruitment and retention of physicians.
- Directs the VA to examine pain management practices, particularly for those veterans with chronic pain issues and who are dependent on opioids.

Title III - Education

- Increases oversight of schools eligible to receive GI Bill benefits and increases counseling and access to reliable information for student veterans.
- Continues the basic allowance for housing (BAH) and reinstates GI Bill eligibility for veterans affected by closures of educational institutions.
- Allows students to use VA education benefits for assistance with application fees.
- Ensures that certain time on active duty while in the reserve components of the Armed Forces is considered for the purposes of GI Bill benefit eligibility.
- Expands resources for veterans on campus.

Title IV – Disability Compensation and Pension

- Reforms and modifies the disability claims appeals process, increasing adjudication timeliness and accuracy.
- Expands spousal benefits to same-sex spouses.
- Repeals the disabled veterans' tax and allows retired service members who have a service-connected disability rated less than 50% to receive concurrent payment of both retired pay and veterans' disability compensation.

Title V – Housing and Homelessness

- Extends the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Programs (HVRP) for 5 years.
- Creates a position in the Department of Housing and Urban Development specifically responsible for ensuring veterans' housing needs are being met.
- Creates a pilot grant program for veterans' organizations to buy, renovate, and repurpose abandoned homes for homeless veterans.
- Expands the definition of "homelessness" for the purpose of veterans' homelessness programs, veterans participating in HUD-VASH, those transitioning from being incarcerated, and those fleeing from domestic violence.

Title VI – Employment and Training

- Creates a direct employment pilot program for veterans and members of the reserve components of our Armed Services.
- Increases incentives for businesses to hire veterans.
- Expands small business opportunities for veterans', specifically service-disabled veterans and their spouses.
- Creates a pilot program to boost job-training for positions in the manufacturing industry.

Title VII – Construction and Leases

- Improves and streamlines the process for major VA construction and facilities leasing.
- Authorizes the VA to move forward with the West LA Medical Center Master Plan to better meet the health and housing needs of veterans in Southern California.

Title VIII – Other Matters

- Honors as veterans anyone entitled to retired pay for nonregular service in the reserve components of our Armed Forces, or, but for age, would be so entitled.
- Establishes a veteran visa program, permitting eligible deported veterans to permanently return to the United States as a Lawful Permanent Residents eligible for naturalization.
- Helps service members discharged solely due to their sexual orientation correct their military records to reflect their honorable service and reinstate the benefits they earned.
- Improves the family reunification process for the sons and daughters of Filipino World War II veterans and ensures that these families receive the benefits they deserve.
- Extends burial benefits to Hmong and Lao Americans who served beside U.S. Armed Forces during the Vietnam War.